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ABSTRACT

This study sought to answer three questions: (1) Do parents with children below 3 years of age expect fewer educational components in day care than parents with children age 3 and above? (2) Do parents expect the staff of day care services to be professionals? and (3) Do parents' expectations match policy makers' intentions? Surveys were administered to 100 parents with children in day care in Sydney, Australia, and interviews were conducted with 4 day care professionals with various administrative and policy-making roles. Findings showed that parents expected a substantial educational component to day care, whether their children were under or over age 3. Parents expected both care and education for their children and expected a reasonable level of staff professionalism and qualification. The day care professionals generally indicated that parents perceive the major function of day care as caregiving, with children under age 3 needing more caregiving than education. The study concludes that there is a mismatch between what parents want and what they get, and that policy makers and day care providers should move services more in line with parents' expectations. (Contains 38 references.) (EV)

Do Parents Get What They Want From Day Care Service?

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Abstract

Four potential policy makers in Day Care (DC) service in Sydney were interviewed and 100 parents were surveyed. The parents expected a substantial component of education, whether their children were above or under age 3. They expected both care and education for their children and expected a reasonable level of staff professionalism and qualifications in the service. The potential policy makers seemed to believe that the major function of DC is caregiving and to assume that children under 3 need more caregiving than education. There seems to be a mismatch between what parents get and what they want from early childhood education. Policy makers need to satisfy the parents' actual needs and wishes and should be aware of the important value of national investment in human resources through improved early childhood education.

In countries such as the U.S. and Australia, child care has been primarily a work-related service to meet parents' needs regardless of potential benefits for children. However, with the parents' increased knowledge about the importance of early education for their children, whether the provision of care alone would satisfy their expectations is unclear. Whereas the emphasis on the function of care is often clearly reflected in policies, whether what the policy makers think is really what parents want may be questionable. This paper attempts to investigate parents' viewpoints toward the kind of service that they think day care (DC) provides, who expects more educational components from the services, and whether parents expect a high level of professionalism in the services. More specifically, this paper addresses these research questions: (a) Do parents with children below 3 years of age expect less educational components than those with children 3 and above; (b) Do parents expect the staff in the services to be professionals; and (c) Do parents' expectations match policy makers' intentions?

Child-minding Or Education?

Gestwicki (1997) describes a variety of early childhood programs ranging from family child care which provides more homelike care environments to more formal educational programs such as Head Start. Nonprofit day care centers pertain to more formal organizations, often supported by public funds. In countries such as the U.S. and Australia, day care primarily means "minding" or "day nurseries" (Mayall & Petrie, 1983, p. 3). In Australia, for example, this may refer to "arrangement made for the care of children under 12 years of age" (Child care Australia, 1996, p. 4). The kind of day care services children get is closely related to government policies which is often linked to economic issues with the purpose of easing parents' employment needs (Lamb, Sternberg, Hwang, & Broberg, 1992; Mayall & Petrie, 1983; McGurk, 1997). However, parents today may also expect educational components that may enhance their children's personal development.

Whereas caring and education are generally perceived as two major purposes of child care services, they often constitute conflicting goals and inevitably vast differences in running costs (Scarr, 1998). The introduction of regulations by governments with the purpose of quality control has led not only to a shift from a purely caregiving role to a more educational-role, but also to better quality, higher professionalism, and ultimately higher costs (Moyle et al., 1996; Scarr, 1998). The urge for higher qualifications of staff is further exacerbated by the expectations of the parents who pay for the service as customers.

Historically, an increase of females in the workforce in the last two decades has intensified the demand for day care (Gestwicki, 1997). The working mothers' dual role of employee and caregiver was often stressful (Gestwicki, 1987; Neal, Chapman, Ingersoll-Dayton, Emlen, & Boise, 1990; Neal, Chapman, Ingersoll-Dayton, & Emlen, 1993), particularly because child care services were hard to find. The major purpose of day care then was to maintain a balance between employment and family (Neal et al., 1993) such that the mother could remain employed. For this child-minding purpose family day care services were probably most appropriate (Emlen, 1973).

However, with rapid expansion of children's services, day care today may no longer be in such great demand in some countries. Parents today apparently have more choices than before. In the Australian setting, the choice and quality of services available to families is a result of a combination of social, political, and economic developments during the past 20 years (Arthur, Beecher, Dockett, Farmer, & Richards, 1993). Although families used to have limited choices due to the demand for places particularly for children under 3 years of age (Brennan, 1994), because of recent changes in government policy resulting in reduced financial support to families, the Senate Community Affairs Committee (1998)

has found that there are now more places available for children than there is demand in large suburban areas.

When supply outweighs demand and when customers need to pay for the service and have plenty of choices, it is not surprising that they ask for even better quality. Unclear is, however, what characterizes quality day care. Neal et al. (1993) have suggested that the notion of quality care has often been based on partial knowledge of researchers whereas "questions that remain unanswered include how well care is provided by caregivers, how well consumers understand it and are willing to pay for it, or how well the community is able and willing to support it" (pp. 73-74). Whereas policies are often made on the basis of theories and scientific thinking, Singer (1996) pointed out that in the 1990s when more attention is being paid to what parents really want, it is important to find out "just how far away scientific thinking is from parents' thinking" (p. 164).

The Issue of Professionalism

The differential perceptions of care and education have probably led to a differentiation between the primary function of preschools that is thought to be educational for children's future schooling and the function of DC services that is thought to be custodial physical caregiving (Smith, 1996). Some policy makers have established the notion that because preschools are educational, there is the need to employ trained teachers for the older children (Gifford, 1992). Based on the same argument, there is less urgent need for DC services to employ qualified teachers because they are not educational. Subsequently beliefs regarding the preschool and DC services have been differentiated into education and care respectively. In recent years, however, the aims of DC have shifted more to an educational and developmental role (Brennan, 1994) which has been further reinforced by government control on quality. Because DC services are expected to meet children's needs in various areas, the distinction between preschools and DC centers should no longer exist because they represent only two settings of a wide range of children's needs (Gifford, 1992). This also implies the need for professional educators in DC services. Indeed, research has shown that one of the major factors that is associated with quality of child care is the qualification of staff (Gestwicki, 1997; Pence & Goelman, 1991; Ruopp, Travers, Glantz, & Coelen, 1979). However, misconceptions about the educational needs of children at different age levels may still exist and the qualification of staff is still debatable.

The Age Issue

One major misconception regarding the function of DC is that educational components are not necessary and not expected by parents with children below 3 years of age. Although the reason for a distinction between children below 3 and above 3 is unclear, it seems that traditionally, the age of 3 was used in defining the intensity of care and the kind of service assumed to be appropriate

for children (Brennan & O'Donnell, 1988; Singer, 1996). This distinction is probably due to policies and regulations rather than actual customer needs. For example, for children from 12 to 35 months, policies of states in the U.S. clearly stipulate the teacher-children ratio in the services, even though these ratios vary widely--ranging from 4 to 13 children per caregiver--across states (Scarr, 1998). Even though some researchers have criticized that the use of age 3 as a cut point for educational readiness may no longer be appropriate (e.g., Brennan & O'Donnell, 1998), policy documents in countries such as Australia, the U.S., and perhaps Germany, explicitly treated children above 3 years of age differently from younger children in terms of educational needs.

Conflicting Views Toward Day Care

In contrast to the differentiation between the caregiving and educational functions, the New South Wales (NSW) state government of Australia introduced the implementation of educare that focuses on both "the standard of care and education" (National Child Care Accreditation Council, 1993; also see Caldwell, 1991). Whereas DC services have seldom considered children as the primary clients in the past (McGurk, 1997), the NSW government seems to be a pioneer of this consideration. Although the policies still emphasize the function of "enabling parents to work or meet other needs", at least one of the documented functions was "providing children with both social and educational opportunities" (NSW Department of Community Services, 1996, p. 23).

Despite this innovative idea of emphasizing both the functions of care and education at all levels of early childhood services, pre-existing views of particularly the policy makers are unlikely to be changed overnight. Thus although the major purpose of the present study is an investigation of parents' perceptions of DC services, an interesting issue to examine is whether the policy makers' views match the parents' expectations. After several decades of DC services existing as a place for child-minding, it is not surprising if the primary function of DC has been assumed to be child-minding.

As Mayall and Petrie (1983) have commented that "the kind of care children get depends a good deal on what policy makers think and do" (p. 3), DC services have always been perceived as less educational than preschools and other settings. Parents' perceptions about DC services are subsequently shaped by the policies. It is probably due to its pre-existing work-related function that DC has been perceived to be primarily child-minding in order to ease parents' stress for employment more than being educational for children's development. Misconceptions about day care as child-minding are highlighted by the viewpoint that "teachers teach in educational settings and carers care in care settings" (Stonehouse, 1994, p. 78), as well as the labels such as pre-school implying its educational function and day care implying its child-minding function. These misconceptions are at least partly due to what policy makers have imposed on the customers of the services.

In the present study, it is hypothesized that parents as customers of the DC services expect both child-minding and education for their children irrespective of their children's age, that parents expect the staff to be professionals, and that there may be conflicts of viewpoints between policy makers and customers of DC services. The study is a blend of both qualitative data from interviews with potential policy makers and quantitative data from a survey with parents.

Method

Quantitative and Qualitative Data Collection

Data collection for this study comprises two sections: (a) collection of quantitative data from parents who had children enrolled in DC centers; and (b) collection of qualitative data through interviews with people related to the management level of the early childhood field.

Parent Survey Data

The survey consisted of 20 questions (see Table 1) each with an 8-point scale (1 = definitely false to 8 = definitely true) such that responses > 4 can be interpreted as agreeing with the statement; and one question for free responses. They were randomly distributed to any parent available at 15 DC Centers in different locations of metropolitan Sydney so that the sample covered a wide range of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.

Participants. Completed (or partly completed) questionnaires were collected from 100 parents; 90% were mothers. Although most of the parents were working class, they differed in their levels of education and income. Completion of these questionnaires was absolutely voluntary. Because of missing data (e.g., age of child unknown), some of the analyses were based on the responses of only 72 parents.

Survey questions. A total of 20 items were designed for the present purpose. Two sets of 6 items each asked about perceptions of education in DC and whether qualified staff are necessary to achieve the goals (items 1 to 12 in Appendix). The two scales were: perceived Importance of education and Professionalism in education (Table 1). The next 6 questions focused on the issue of whether DC should provide child-minding or education for children (items 13 to 18 in Appendix). The last 2 questions asked whether the staff should be female and whether professionalism should be raised (items 19 and 20 in Appendix). Also, parents wrote down their opinions in response to the free-response question.

Statistical Analyses. The data were analyzed with SPSS (1993). Missing values for each variable were replaced by the mean value of that variable for the whole sample. Principal component analysis was conducted for the six Importance and six Professionalism items with the expectation of two constructs. On the basis of these two a priori factors, responses to the six items were averaged for each factor. To compare the responses of parents with

children under 3 years of age and parents with children 3 years old and above, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted for the two factor scores. F-statistics are reported in Table 1.

Results: Parent Survey Data

The Importance and Professionalism Factors

The alpha reliability estimates for the two a priori factors were .73 and .92, respectively. On the basis of responses from 100 parents, principal component analysis with varimax rotation for two factors yielded the two a priori factors as expected with factor loadings of .58, .70, .59, .48, .84, and .64 for Importance and .75, .87, .89, .86, .82, and .81 for Professionalism, respectively.

Who Expects More Educational Components

Responses to the six items for the Importance factor ($M = 7.28$, $SD = 0.64$, $N = 100$) and six items for Professionalism ($M = 6.47$, $SD = 1.51$, $N = 100$) were averaged. Results of the MANOVA for these two factor scores found statistically nonsignificant differences between the two groups of parents, $ns = 24$ and 48 , $F(2, 69) = 0.86$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Univariate F-tests for the Importance and Professionalism factors were both statistically nonsignificant, $F(1, 70) = 0.00$, $MSE = 0.34$, $\eta^2 = .00$; and $F(1, 70) = 1.57$, $MSE = 2.39$, $\eta^2 = .02$, respectively (Table 1). These results indicate that parents with children 3 years of age or above did not differ statistically from parents with children below 3 in their perceived importance of educational components in DC services and did not differ statistically in their expectations of staff qualification for achieving educational goals.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Responses of Parents with Child/ren Under 3 or 3 and Above

Variable	Child < 3 (n = 24)		Child => 3 (n = 48)		F(1,70)	MSE	η^2	Agreed
	Mean	(SD)	Mean	(SD)				
Importance factor from PCA	7.39	(0.48)	7.39	(0.63)	0.00	0.34	.00	
Professionalism factor from PCA	6.19	(1.90)	6.68	(1.34)	1.57	2.39	.02	
<u>The Center should be</u>								
child-minding	5.92	(2.47)	6.09	(1.91)	0.11	4.44	.00	78.2%
preparing for future schooling	6.96	(1.20)	7.33	(0.93)	2.15	1.05	.03	97.4%
more than child-minding	7.09	(1.44)	7.35	(0.90)	0.84	1.23	.01	97.4%
covering all areas of development	7.38	(1.53)	7.35	(0.83)	0.01	1.23	.00	98.7%
a home-like environment	6.37	(1.76)	6.89	(1.36)	1.89	2.26	.03	93.6%
focusing on parents' needs	3.42	(1.98)	3.72	(2.27)	0.31	4.73	.00	33.3%
<u>Other</u>								
Staff should be female	3.29	(2.54)	3.46	(2.47)	0.07	6.21	.00	38.5%
Should raise professionalism	6.08	(2.02)	6.74	(1.47)	2.44	2.79	.03	88.5%

Note. * $p < .05$. $N = 72$. Two factors derived from principal component analysis (PCA) were Importance and Professionalism. Agreed = percentage of parents who responded 5 or above on an 8-point scale; these percentages only slightly differed from unreported results based on the whole sample.

An inspection of the mean score of each item in the two scales (not reported in Table 1) also found that the parents in both groups perceived

education as important and that qualified staff were necessary for the care and education of their children (all $M_s > 5.5$ on an 8-point scale). The percentage of parents providing different levels of favoring responses was high for education (98.7% had responses > 4 for each item). Parents with children over 3 years of age showed higher preference for qualified staff. However, even for this item, the percentage of parents in both groups favoring qualified staff was high (91%). These results indicate that parents, irrespective of the age of their children, had much stronger expectations for education than child-minding for their children in DC centers.

In sum, parents with children below and above age 3 did not differ statistically in their perceptions of importance of care and education and expectation of professionalism in care and education. They both wanted high quality care and education in DC services.

Child-minding Or Preparation For Schooling

Whereas most of the parents agreed that DC services should have a child-minding function (78.2%) and should provide a home-like environment (93.6%), they did not see the major focus of DC services to be placed on the parents' needs (33.3%). Instead, almost all these parents agreed that DC services should be more than child-minding (97.4%), should be preparing for their children's future schooling (97.4%), and should be covering all areas of their children's development (93.6%). Furthermore, unlike what might be expected in the early days when DC services served mainly as a substitute for motherhood, the results show that the function of DC as serving the needs of parents may no longer be perceived as important as before (means < 4 and only a total of 33.3% had responses > 4). More importantly, parents with children under 3 and those with children 3 or above did not differ statistically in their expectations (Table 1).

Other Related Issues

Gender of staff. Less than half of the parents believed that DC services should be run by female staff (both means < 4 , and only 38.5% of responses > 4). Indeed, the free comments in the survey revealed that at least four parents believed that male staff should be an asset to the service.

Should professionalism of staff be raised. Most of the parents found the necessity for improving the professionalism of staff in DC services (88.5%), and the two groups of parents did not differ in their viewpoints. In terms of staff professionalism, it is also interesting to note that a high percentage of the responses to the open question are related to the issue of qualifications and professionalism of DC staff. It seems that some of these parents tend to conform to the existing model of DC services imposed by government policies, but basically they want a reasonable number of professionals in the service, although what they mean by professionals may not be very clear.

Interview Data

Interviews were conducted in metropolitan Sydney separately at locations convenient to the interviewees. Three interviewers asked questions that were prepared beforehand, but encouraged the interviewees to elaborate on any related issues that were of interest to them. The conversations were recorded on audio tapes. Because of time constraints, only relevant sections of the conversations were transcribed on paper and analyzed.

Interviewees. Four persons were interviewed, including a full-time Director of a private DC center, the Children's Services Manager of a City Council, an officer of the State Department of Community Services, and a highly experienced DC teacher who was also a Union Representative. Because of their positions as potential policy makers, it may be assumed that their viewpoints represent, at least to a reasonable extent, the policy makers' standpoints. Because of their different roles as program manager and administrator at different levels (local, private, state) and their various perspectives due to their potentially different focuses of concern (a single DC center, a range of services including DC within a region, staff welfare), their responses may reflect a range of viewpoints that may be generalized across a wider range of potential policy makers. However, this variety of interviewees may also undermine the representativeness of each respondent's viewpoints of other people in a similar position.

Interview questions. Several questions were used as starters followed by 10 questions that addressed the focus of this study. However the interviewees were free to express their viewpoints and further questions were asked on the spot where appropriate.

Results: Interview Data

Due to the richness of the data resulting from open-ended discourse, we focus only on data that are directly relevant to this study. Consistent with the parent survey, the interviews were coded in terms of the interviewees' opinions toward the function of DC services (care vs. education) and professionalism of staff.

Who Expects More Educational Components

The interviewees held quite different viewpoints toward the functions of DC centers. For example, the Children's Services Manager believed that most parents with children of 3 years old or above tend to expect an increased emphasis on the educational components; thus she commented that "people don't think about educating children until the age of three." However, she also emphasized that from a professional viewpoint, "children are educated through play and daily routine right from birth", undermining the age of 3 as a critical age for starting education. Nevertheless her experience in the field seemed to suggest that it is mainly the perception of the general public that "under 3, parents emphasize more on care."

The Union Representative specifically indicated 3 years of age as a critical age cut point for considering what kind of service is expected: "Prior government was more committed to social policy, not just based on economy. Children that have special needs, language difficulties, and under 3 years old need more service", and the kind of service she referred to was more care than education.

The officer from the State Department of Community pointed out that the government policies seemed to assume child-minding, rather than education, as an essential function of DC services and "the government is not supporting DC center academically." Although personally emphasizing a balance between care and education, she also anticipated better service by employing university-trained staff to teach children of 3 to 5 years old.

The Director of a private DC center believed that DC serves both functions of child-minding and education. From an educator's perspective, she emphasized that "regardless of age we have some kind of program to cover their developmental needs as well as just the love and care." However, pointing out recent societal changes that have placed an increasing emphasis on the education component, she commented that parents are "becoming more aware of it now. I think the stigma a couple of years ago was it's just child-minding but now I think that's all changing and is for the better." She went on to give some examples of such changes: "Well for example, the regulations in child care is always changing. You have to have early childhood teacher on site with x amount of children; you have to have programs for each age group, evaluations, observation and so on; whereas before there wasn't such a strong emphasis on that kind of thing but there is now." The Director's point of view also differs from the others in that according to her own experience, it is mostly the choice of the staff themselves to teach children of 3 years or over after obtaining their qualifications.

Hence, despite their different positions and philosophies regarding the functions of the DC centers, all four interviewees seemed to assume that the community expects a greater emphasis on education only when the child turns 3 years old.

Professionalism of Staff

Regarding professionalism of the staff in DC centers, the officer from the Department of Community Services explicitly endorsed the idea of an all-qualified staff: "Oh I would love it. This is a personal thing but I would love to have all staff trained." She advocated this because she believed 0 to 5 years old is a critical period: "Children zero to five learn so much. These people are really professional, certainly under paid for everyone, especially for Directors."

The Children's Services Manager felt that higher qualifications of staff would produce higher quality of service. The center Director, however, seemed to follow strictly the guidelines set by the government regarding the

professionalism of staff: "I honestly don't think it is necessary to get an early childhood teacher to work with the zero to two group."

Although the Union Representative did not address this question directly, she did emphasize the importance of professionalism by encouraging DC center staff to: "get society realize, get parents and workers be involved in and voice out it is a profession."

Hence all of the interviewees perceived the importance of professionalism in DC staff, consistent with the viewpoints of the parents. However, the potential policy makers did not seem to realize that parents want their children to receive education in DC, whether they have younger or older children.

Discussion

The present study examined the views of parents toward the function of DC services. The critical questions were whether DC services are perceived as solely child-minding or should include educational elements, who expects education from the services, and whether the staff in the services should be professionals. Interviews with potential policy makers were conducted to supplement findings from surveys completed by parents from DC centers. The results show potentially conflicting viewpoints among the service providers and the customers of the service.

Nearly all the parents perceived the importance of education for their children and the need for professionals in the staff. Parents who had children under 3 expected education for their young ones no less than parents who had older children. All the parents, whether their children were younger or older, had high educational expectations (means equal to or greater than 7 with 8 as the maximum possible score). The parents in the present study expected more than solely child-minding from DC. The data showed that the parents expected DC centers to cover all areas of their children's development as well as to prepare their children for future schooling. However, data from the interviews revealed that potential policy makers tend to assume that children under 3 do not need education and that their parents do not value education as much as the caregiving function of DC services. These results suggest that the provision of services that emphasize more caregiving than education to children under 3 is probably inappropriate and is not what the parents want.

The fact that what policy makers believe may not be what the parents really value, as indicated in the results here, is a serious issue. It undermines the usefulness and suitability of the service that is implemented under current government policies. Although the potential policy makers in the present study may assume that the caregiving function of the DC service is valued more by parents of children under 3 years of age, and that the educational function is not a major concern until the children turn 3, the parents seem to value both, and particularly education, irrespective of their children's age.

In contrast, in terms of the professionalism of DC staff, the potential policy makers' views were more consistent with the parents'. Both advocated professionalism of staff at a high level. High quality DC services are impossible without high quality human resources to implement developmentally appropriate programs to accomplish educational goals. In the field of early childhood services, the quality of child care has been found to be highly variable (Galinsky, Howes, Kontos, & Shinn, 1994). Some researchers have found that DC services did not seem to benefit children much in social and academic competence (Scarr & Thompson, 1994). Instead of attributing the apparent failure of DC services to their inability in achieving certain educational goals, perhaps an important issue is to investigate whether DC centers in their present form are sufficiently well equipped to achieve these goals. The most important of basic requisites for achieving educational goals is probably the professionalism of staff in the DC centers.

Given the apparently low social status and low income of DC educators compared to educators in other settings, it is difficult to attract people to join the career. Also, due to the misconception that DC is somewhat equivalent to an extension of mothering, it is unlikely to attract male staff to enter the career. The existing gender bias is at least partly due to the misconception of this career as child-minding or mothering, and partly due to policies that devalue the educational component of DC.

Educators have generally argued for the importance of early learning for establishing social, emotional and intellectual competence (Gifford, 1992). Stonehouse (1994), for example, has roughly estimated that a child may spend a total of 600 hours in preschool or kindergarten, 1,320 hours in school, but up to 2,400 hours in child care. Thus early educational benefits through these many hours' contacts with well qualified early childhood educators may significantly influence children's future life. The inclusion of educational components is therefore important in DC services. However, the misconception of learning from school age, particularly the presumed critical age of 3 due mainly to ungrounded beliefs of policy makers, may continue to mislead the public to perceive DC as no more than child-minding. This misled view of the public could in turn affect the policy makers in their decisions regarding the focus of DC services.

Nevertheless, as the data in the present study show, parents today ask for education in addition to the traditional expectation of child-minding from DC centers. For the best educational and developmental outcomes, professionalism of staff should not be neglected, even for children under three. The lack of either care or education in DC will ultimately affect children's later development and perhaps performance in school. Since training and qualification of staff are good predictors of desirable outcomes of children, staff in DC should have tertiary training and appropriate qualification (McGurk,

1997). Overall, the results of the present study suggest that policy makers may not really know what the customers want from DC, and such findings have important implications for policy making and improvement of the DC services.

Children in society are the most vulnerable and are unable to decide what they want (Stonehouse, 1994). Researchers, parents, and service providers should reveal facts about the real needs of the users of the service based on real data such as those in the present study. Whereas parents probably "believe in the ideal that the healthy development of children is a key to our future" (Gestwicki, 1997; p. 48), policy makers need also to see children as valuable human resources and the future of the nation; and that investment on children is a wise choice (Stonehouse, 1994). Unfortunately the results of the present study suggest that there seems to be a mismatch between what policy makers and program personnel think and what parents really want and that common assumptions about infant/toddler care can be challenged.

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Appendix**Parent Survey Items**

1. It is important that the Center is a place for educating children.
2. It is important that children form clean habits.
3. It is important that children form good eating habits.
4. It is important that children form good resting habits.
5. It is important that children learn when they play in the Center.
6. It is important that children form good toilet habits.
7. Qualified staff are necessary to educate children in the Center.
8. Qualified staff are necessary for children to form clean habits.
9. Qualified staff are necessary to ensure children form good eating habits.
10. Qualified staff are necessary to ensure children form good resting habits.
11. Qualified staff are necessary to ensure children learn when they play.
12. Qualified staff are necessary to ensure children form good toilet habits.
13. The Center should be child-minding.
14. The Center should prepare children for future schooling.
15. The Center should do more than just child minding.
16. The Center should cover all areas of child development.
17. The Center should provide a home-like environment for children.
18. The Center should focus on parents' needs more than children's needs.
19. The staff of the Center should be female.
20. The Government should raise the professionalism of Center staff.

Note: Items 1 to 6 formed an Education factor. Items 7 to 12 formed a Professionalism factor. The items were in a randomized order in the parent survey.